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# Pragmatics of expressive syntax of texts of english political discourse as a problem of translation

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### **Abstract.**

The article examines the pragmatics of using expressive syntax in political discourse, namely in the texts of English political speeches, and the problems of their reproduction in the Ukrainian language. The characteristic features of political discourse and the role of expressive syntax in it are determined on the examples of political speeches of politicians and presidents of Ukraine, the United States of America and Great Britain posted on official public websites. The peculiarities of using expressive syntax in political speeches are analysed and the functions and pragmatic tasks of using such expressive means are established. The pragmatic structure of individual sentences and their importance for achieving expressiveness of political speech are also considered. The problem of translating expressive syntax is studied and effective translation transformations are proposed for reproducing expressive syntax in English political speeches in Ukrainian.

### **Keywords:**

*pragmatics*  
*expressive syntax*  
*political discourse*  
*political speech*  
*translation transformation*

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The particularity of politics, unlike other spheres of human activity, lies in social relations of dominance and subjugation. Such argumentative models are deliberately used in political discourse, which primarily affect not the mind of a person, but his feelings (the speaker appeals to traditions, generally recognized authorities, socio-cultural values, historical examples, etc.). Such argumentation is characterized by a special emotionality and expressiveness to attract attention, which is achieved in the speech of political discourse with the help of different means, such as:

- the choice of words and expressions that are referentially the same, but from a pragmatic point of view belong to different systems of world perception and value orientations;

- the creation of new words and expressions;

- the choice of the most appropriate grammatical forms, such as the use of elliptical constructions or passive grammatical constructions in order to mask the agent;

- the use of suprasegmental means such as emphasis, intonation, etc.;

- the use of stylistically coloured combinations of words, when language units of a neutral style, used in the same row with negatively marked vocabulary, acquire negative connotations.

It should be noted that to reproduce a foreign literary text in another language preserving the appropriate level of its original expressiveness is almost an impossible task. To solve the problem of translating expressive syntax it is necessary to reproduce the syntactic structure of a foreign language sentence, which is complicated by the difference between the grammatical systems of the source language and the target one. A clear delineation of the means of expressive syntax is important both for the theory and for the practice of translation, since insufficient attention to the means and methods of reproducing original expressiveness in the translated text causes the inadequacy of the translation and the distortion of the author's intention. And if such a means of expressive syntax as repetition is quite easy to be implemented during translation, then a number of other means of expressive syntax (grammatical parallelism, inversion,

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etc.) require significant translation transformations during reproduction. Moreover, the reproduction of expressive syntax also touches the problem of observing pragmatics, since individual means can be translated both literally and descriptively by using certain translation transformations and strategies.

The current state research in linguistics is characterized by the formation of a cognitive-discursive paradigm of knowledge, the priority aspect of which is the analysis of communicative activity based on internal mental processes (O. Morozova, O. Selivanova, I. Shevchenko, S. Zhabotynska, etc.). Both individual cognitive constructs (O. Zaburanna) and conceptual systems verbalized in a certain type of discourse (L. Belekhova) became the object of cognitive-communicative research. In Ukrainian linguistics, the analysis of discourse is receiving more and more intense elaboration, which is due to the anthropocentric methodological paradigm as the leading one in the research of human linguistic activity. Discourse analysis at its different level characteristics is provided in domestic and foreign linguistics by F. Bacevich, O. Selivanova, K. Serazhim, M. Stubbs, V. Chernyavska, I. Shevchenko and others.

The study of the problem of the generation and functioning of discourse is one of the leading directions of world linguistics. According to Y. Loboda [1], such terms as "the language of politics", "political communication", "political discourse" are terms that are interconnected in most works. She identifies the terms "political discourse" and "political communication", and considers "the language of politics" as a structured set of signs that form the semiotic space of political discourse [1, p. 10]. Within the framework of linguistic research, T. van Dijk [2] singles out three approaches to the study of political discourse: the descriptive approach, which is reduced to the classical method of rhetorical analysis of public speeches; linguistic behaviour of politicians, means of communication, rhetorical techniques and manipulative strategies are considered; the critical approach, which is aimed at the critical study of social morality expressed in language or discourse; speech is

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seen as a means of power and social control; the cognitive approach, which makes it possible to move from the description of discourse units and structures to the modelling of the structures of consciousness of participants in political communication [2, p. 362].

A. Fetzer and E. Weitzman [3] determine the following functions of political discourse: dissemination of information; definition and control of the agenda; projection into the future and the past, analyzing the positive or negative experience of the past [3, p. 146]. A. Vovk singles out the function of constructing the speech reality, characterizing it as such a state of affairs in which the speech essence is primary in relation to non-speech ones. Closely related to the creative function is the magical function, which manifests itself in the forms of taboos: prayers, oaths, etc. Belief in the magic of words is also characteristic of a modern man, which is a component not only of religious discourse, but also of political discourse. It is worth noting that speech reality can manifest itself in two ways: totalitarian and democratic [4, p. 160].

M. Bagan, Z. Vysotska, G. Dyadyura, N. Kovalska, E. Chaikovska and others study the specifics of the manifestation of expressiveness and related linguistic concepts in modern Ukrainian scientific discourse. Expressiveness in each specific case is realized with the help of a wide variety of linguistic means, and any linguistic unit in a certain context acquires internal or external expressiveness and turns into a means of influencing, strengthening and expressing speech [5, p. 35]. However, a detailed study of the pragmatic influence of means of expressive syntax in political discourse and their reproduction in the Ukrainian language has not been conducted at the moment.

The aim of the work is to study the communicative-pragmatic aspects of expressive syntax implemented in political discourse, based on the material of English political speeches in light of their reproduction in Ukrainian translation.

One of the main aspects of the pragmatics of the English texts of political discourse is the attitude of communicators

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to the signs used. This aspect is realized in modal-evaluative units (illocution) as explication and is presented as the selection of the most adequate means of expression. In the process of creating a text message, the author constructs in his mind a subject-logical model of the situation. The means of speech design of this model can vary depending on the intention to focus attention on a certain aspect of the message. Therefore, the individual carries out pragmatically oriented activities, resorting to the implementation of two main functions of the language, namely, communicative (transmission of essential information) and expressive (transmission of relevant information). The author's positive or negative assessment, both direct and indirect, guides the further direction of thoughts of the target audience, signals to the recipient how to treat a particular fact. Using manipulative techniques, the author imposes his positions, forcing the audience to perceive the message through the prism of his own worldview.

The functional features and pragmatic tasks of the use of syntactic means of expressiveness in the English texts of political discourse are determined by the fact that expressiveness, which creates novelty and uniqueness of the image, is the result of the addressee's subjective-individual approach to their use, the set goals and motives of linguistic communication, and the special purpose of propaganda language situation.

Syntax, closely related to the content of the utterance, the genre of speech, its direction and addressee, is one of the most important stylistic tools. The uniqueness of the syntactic structure of political speech is a powerful means of influencing the consciousness of the electorate. The syntactic organization of speech plays an important role in revealing the influence of journalism. Expressive syntactic units serve to form the semantic-pragmatic content of political speech, since the inseparable connection of language and thinking, reflected in the structure of the text, is especially clearly manifested in syntax.

Expressive syntax, aimed at strengthening and consolidating the stated theses, convincingly proving the significance of the future fulfilment of election promises in

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the lives of voters, can be expressed by different types of language means, which include parallel constructions; elliptical sentences, etc., which are characterized by brevity, energy of expression and which act as an effective way of increasing semantic capacity. The same function can be performed by:

- nominative sentences, which are characterized by a large semantic capacity, brevity, and special tension; this special ability is used in the speech of politicians when the message or information is close in content to the replica;

- parcellation, in which a thought is embodied in a pseudo-spontaneous form by breaking down a single structure into its component parts; as a result, the formal connection between the fragments is completely lost, which is a means of clarifying the communicative direction of the statement and expressively emphasizing its content;

- connecting constructions, the main purpose of which is to attach to the main statement expanding and clarifying, explanatory components that appear in the mind not simultaneously with the main idea, but after its formation, and segmented constructions facilitate its perception;

- constructions with character speech, based on the inclusion of another person or source of information in the author's speech;

- dialogic communication, which is clearly visible in the interview genre.

Research into the features of political communication at the syntactic level shows that politicians prefer simple sentences for better perception of information. That is, at the syntactic level, the use of simple sentences prevails in English political discourse. This allows the speaker to be more expressive and convincing, closer to the people. His speech becomes more understandable and accessible to different social strata of the population.

For example: *That Putin is not only our enemy, but an enemy for the whole of Europe.* [6] *All of you - a big team that really help us.* [7] *Personal interests - after the war.* [8]

One of the means of achieving the pragmatic goal of political speeches is the use of **rhetorical questions** that do

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not require an answer, but create the idea of a dialogue between a politician and the people. The affirmative phrase turns into a question that does not require an answer from the recipients. This figure is intended to stimulate the opinion of the audience by actualizing the content of a certain part of the statement. A rhetorical question allows the speaker to raise the overall emotional tone of the statement in order to enhance its pragmatic effect.

For example: *Are we starting to form a plan B here? What if the supplemental doesn't come in a timely way? If the EU doesn't come, what's the next plan? Is it declaring a national emergency? Does the executive branch have some tools? What's the plan?* [9].

In this fragment, the speaker uses several rhetorical questions focusing on the most important points of the situation and demonstrating his own attitude to the problem and his personal interest in it. Rhetorical questions help to communicate between official representatives of the government and the people.

In the next example, the rhetorical question emphasizes that the politician is interested in the opinion of the people: *And how can one be satisfied with the sanctions against Russia or export controls if they don't even block its missile production?* [10] In Ukrainian translation, – *І як можна бути задоволеним санкціями проти Росії чи експортними обмеженнями, якщо вони навіть не блокують її ракетне виробництво?* [11] – the rhetorical question is preserved, but for the sake of a sentence structure more familiar to the Ukrainian reader impersonal sentence *як можна бути задоволеним* is used to render an English two-member sentence with indefinite subject *one* – *how can one be satisfied*. Without this change, the grammatical structure of the Ukrainian sentence will not correspond to the Ukrainian rules of grammatical construction, and this will create a lot of difficulties in understanding it. Also, in the translation, the word *controls* is not translated literally, but is replaced through modulation by a contextual variant *обмеженнями* to make the utterance clear.

A **question with a reverse meaning** can be used to strengthen the emotional tone of a statement, communicating



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the implicit meaning through the transformation of the interrogative form into an affirmative one.

For example: "*Crisis? What crisis? The 1,000 wealthiest people in the UK are now worth £547bn, not counting what's in their bank accounts, according to the latest Sunday Times Rich List*". [10] - Криза? Яка криза? Згідно зі списком, опублікованим у Сандей Таймз, 1000 найбагатших людей Великої Британії коштують 547 мільярдів фунтів стерлінгів, і це не враховуючи кошти на їхніх банківських рахунках. [11]

The lexeme *crisis* in any context has a negative connotation. However, in this example, under the influence of the context, it conveys the author's surprise and positive assessment of the fact that the richest people in the United Kingdom do not notice the economic crisis.

The most common grammatical means of expressing emphasis is **inversion**, which deliberately breaks the order of words in a sentence to achieve the effect of improvisation in speech. The use of inversion adds expression and casualness to the speech of a politician who tries to be closer to the people by using incorrect, colloquial inflections in his speeches.

For example: *More than citizens of any other country, we are rugged individualists, a self-reliant people with a healthy scepticism of too much government*. [9] - Ми, більш ніж громадяни будь-якої іншої країни, є сильними індивідуалістами, людьми, які покладаються на себе і ставляться зі здоровим скепсисом до надмірної ролі держави.

In this example, the separated part of the complex sentence, which in the original sentence stands before the subject, - *More than citizens of any other country* - is rearranged in the Ukrainian translation after the subject, because in this form the sentence is more syntactically acceptable to Ukrainian readers, because it is immediately clear with whom the mass of citizens of other countries are compared; thus, the grammatical translation transformation of transposition is justified. When translating *a self-reliant people* with the help of the phrase «людьми, які покладаються на себе», lexical and semantic translation transformation of modulation is used since there is the closest equivalent to the English phrase *a self-reliant people* is «самодостатній народ», but it does not fully reflect the essence of the sign.



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**Semantic repetition** plays an important role in the implementation of the suggestive function, or the function of persuasion, influence. Semantic (meaningful) repetition has different embodiments. Firstly, it is realized in tautological repetitions, which arise with the repeated use of the same linguistic units – morphemes, words, phrases or sentences. Secondly, semantic repetition of linguistic units appears when linguistic units that have semantic similarity but are different in terms of expression are used in a phrase, sentence or in the nearest section of the text, that is, it is realized in the phenomena of semantic equivalence.

For example: *Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward, and freedom will be defended.* [7] – Сама свобода була атакована сьогодні вранці безликим боягузом, і свобода буде захищена.

The repetition of the word *freedom* is used to reinforce the importance of freedom and its security, the use of all political measures for its security. Repetition seems to emphasize that freedom is the most important democratic value. In translation, the addition of «сама» at the beginning of the sentence strengthens the meaning of the repeated word, but reduces the effect of the repetition itself, because when the repeated word is at the beginning of the sentence, it is more memorable and becomes more expressive. Therefore, this translation transformation is not quite successful from the point of view of expressive syntax, but it is appropriate and reasonable for understanding the meaning of the expression as a whole.

One of the types of repetition is **anaphora**, which is a figure of addition consisting in the repetition of the initial parts of adjacent sentences.

For example: *Most Americans believe we should invest in education and medical research. Most Americans think we should protect commitments like Social Security and Medicare.* [9] – Більшість американців вважає, що ми маємо інвестувати в освіту і медичні дослідження. Більшість американців вважає, що ми маємо захистити досягнення, такі як державне соціальне страхування і медичне страхування.

Partial coincidence is expressed in some discrepancy of the elements of the translated sentence in terms of form and

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meaning with complete semantic adequacy. The repetition of the phrase *Most Americans* in the translation is reproduced by an exact analogue «Більшість американців», although in the translation, this repetition is somewhat strengthened, since in the original text the first expression sounds like «Більшість американців вірить», and the second – «Більшість американців вважає», and in the translation, not two, but three words are repeated, which also strengthens the expressiveness of the statement.

Grammatical repetitions include **grammatical parallelism**, which is a stylistic syntactic technique in which two or more phrases constructed in the same way. Due to the parallel arrangement of members of the same type of syntactic construction, symmetry arises, which has an aesthetic and rhythmic effect.

For example: *Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. Together, we will make America great again.* [12] – Разом ми знову зміцнимо Америку. Ми знову зробимо Америку гордою. Ми знову зробимо Америку безпечною. Разом ми знову зробимо Америку великою.

The main function of using these means of expressive syntax is to convince the audience of voters. The multiple repetition of parallel constructions *we will make America ... again* makes a politician's speech more convincing and such that there is no doubt about its truthfulness. In this fragment, the mentioned construction emphasizes the fact that the president is trying to get closer to the people and indicates that in the future they will do a common cause and have common goals. He wants to emphasize his unity with the people. The active use of the construction *we will make America ... again* speaks of the tactics of the promise that Joe Biden makes to the American people. In the translation of *will make*, the translation transformation of generalization is applied by using the perfective action «ми зробимо» instead of the imperfective action «ми будемо робити», that is, the expressiveness of this tool emphasizes the focus on the result, not on the process. In this fragment, the repeated parts of the sentences were changed during the translation: if in the original text the word «знову» is at the end of the

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sentence, then in the translated sentences this word is moved inside the repeated expression, between the subject and the predicate, strengthening the expressive potential of the expression that «ми не просто будемо це робити в майбутньому», but «ми зробимо це знову і знову».

**Gradation** is the construction of a statement, in which each subsequent part contains a strengthening or weakening content-expressive value.

For example: *And I accepted the job, sight unseen, motivated then by a single, simple, powerful idea - that I might play a small part in building a better America.* [7] - Нічого не знаючи про цю роботу, я погодився, натхненний єдиною, простою і великою ідеєю - що я можу зробити невеликий внесок у створення кращого майбутнього для Америки.

Each subsequent word in the expression *a single, simple, powerful idea* gives the statement more emotionality, which increases the expressiveness of the statement. In the translation, in order to simplify the perception of a complex sentence between homogeneous parts of the sentence, which in the original are separated by commas, in the Ukrainian version one with a comma is replaced by the conjunction «і», which is even more characteristic of the English language where the last of the homogeneous parts of the sentence should not be separated by a comma, but a conjunction, as if symbolizing the end of the list. However, this replacement somewhat changes the expressive potential of the expression. In the original, gradation is used, i.e., the increase in the strength of the expression with each homogeneous member of the sentence, but in the translation, thanks to this conjunction, the expression is perceived as «простою і водночас великою», i.e. a juxtaposition arises, which is also a means of expression but somewhat with a different connotation.

**Emphatic structures** are also often found in political speeches, because the speaker's target audience is the people, and the politician must clearly emphasize the main points of his speech in order to draw the listeners' attention to the important information and make the perception of this information easier.

For example: *The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works -*

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*whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified.* [7] – Питання, яке ми сьогодні ставимо, – це не те, чи наш уряд занадто великий або занадто малий, але чи працює він – чи допомагає сім'ям знайти роботу за гідну заробітну плату, турботу, яку вони можуть собі дозволити, достроковий вихід на пенсію.

In the translation of *we ask today*, the grammatical translation transformation of transposition is used «ми сьогодні ставимо» (from the usual English order of words in a sentence – subject, predicate, circumstance – the transposition emphasizes the circumstance and brings it before the predicate), as well as *but whether it works* – «чи працює він» (here, during the rearrangement, the action-predicate is brought to the fore, and only then is the noun-subject to which this action refers). These transpositions are used in order to focus the reader's attention on the key words of this statement.

The use of translation transformations to preserve and reproduce expressive syntax is due to the need to formulate the translated expression according to the rules of Ukrainian syntax without losing its expressive potential. Some expressions require literal translation, but most examples have differences in the syntactic structure of sentences. Therefore, the purpose of translation transformations is not only to preserve the content of the original statement and its expressiveness, but also use Ukrainian syntax to reflect the content of the sentence in political speech.

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the use of syntactic expressive means increases the audience's interest in political discourse and, accordingly, stimulates support for a certain politician who is the producer of this discourse. Therefore, the use of expressive syntax has great pragmatic significance and functional load for achieving political goals. Among the types of expressive syntax in the texts of English political discourse, repetitions, inversion, rhetorical questions, emphatic constructions and parallelisms should be noted as the most effective means of achieving a pragmatic effect.

Thus, the peculiarities of translating expressive means of political discourse from English into Ukrainian consist in combining the need to formulate a sentence according to the

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rules of Ukrainian syntax with the preservation of the original expressive syntax of political speech. Since the means of expressive syntax are diverse, the translation assumes the replacement of one type of expressive means by another (for example, parallelism by repetition and vice versa), if this does not reduce the illocutionary force of the expressive means.

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